

fevers, are due the action of a specific poison upon the sympathetic, and that the syphilitic poison may produce disturbance of the sympathetic with perversion of tissue, of metabolism, and excessive production of heat. The inconstancy of the syphilitic fever is explicable on the ground of idiosyncrasy. The roseola is due to vaso-motor changes with dilatation of the capillaries. In pronounced syphilitic lesions, the accumulation of cells is an exaggeration of normal tissue-building that is presided over by the sympathetic. Syphilitic infection has a peculiar affinity for the nervous system, especially for the upper and cervical portion of the sympathetic. The proportion of lesions of the head, face and mouth is larger than other portions of the body, especially those parts supplied by the fifth cranial nerve. The affinity of the specific infection for the iris may be easily explained in view of its sympathetic distribution. Syphilis seemingly possesses the power of dissecting out definite portions of osseous tissue (apparently by cutting off their nutrient supply) in a manner as clearly as it can be done by the knife. The explanation of destruction by pressure of syphilitic exudate will not suffice in these cases. Carefully observed, it will be found that the first symptoms experienced by the patient are those incidental to the presence of a foreign body, *i.e.*, dead bone in the tissues. If pressure were the cause of the necrosis, the death of the bone would be preceded by more or less painful swelling and inflammation. A perversion of trophic function in the nerve filaments supplying the parts is the only plausible explanation. All the pathological processes incidental to syphilis—whether the poison be microbe, degraded cell, or chronic abnormality—are due to disturbances of nutrition, resulting from the profound impressions made upon the sympathetic.

### Asylum Notes.

BY FRANK H. INGRAM.

Dr. Charles W. Pilgrim, formerly an assistant at the Utica Asylum, has been appointed medical superintendent of Willard Asylum, to succeed Dr. P. M. Wise. Dr. Pilgrim, during his long experience with the insane, has gained an enviable reputation as a physician and an executive officer.

Dr. Geo. F. M. Bond resigned the superintendency of the Ward's Island Asylum on March 10th, to enter general practice in this city. Dr. Bond's successor, Dr. William

Austin Macy, was assistant superintendent, and his recently vacated position has been filled by the transfer of Dr. Lucius C. Adamson from the Blackwell's Island Asylum.

During the last few weeks the physicians at the Ward's Island Asylum have had served upon them numerous writs of *habeas corpus*. These writs were issued upon the application of a former asylum patient, who, it would seem, has taken upon himself the task of attempting to liberate some dozens of men believed by him to be sane and unjustly confined. With a single exception, in which the jury's verdict "sane" was scarcely in keeping with the evidence presented, the patients were either remanded to the care of the asylum physicians or were discharged *in custody* of responsible friends.

Dr. Dwight R. Burrell, resident physician of Brigham Hall, Canandaigua, N. Y., and Miss Clara E. Kent, of Kentland, Ind., were married March 20th.

We regret to learn that Dr. J. S. Dorsett, superintendent of the State Lunatic Asylum, Austin, Tex., was attacked and dangerously injured by a patient named McDermott. Dr. Dorsett was struck on the back of the head with an iron bar, and the assault was the outcome of a delusion which originated in the mind of McDermott at the time of the hanging of murderer McCoy, against whom the doctor testified. This is another striking example of the dangers to which asylum physicians are particularly exposed. Since 1875 several men prominent in the profession—notably Dr. Cook, of Canandaigua, Dr. Sawyer, of Providence, and Dr. Metcalfe, of Kingston, Ontario—have died at the hands of insane patients; and the death of Dr. John P. Gray, of Utica, was, in great measure, due to the bullet-wound inflicted by an insane barber.

Dr. Samuel B. Lyon, for several years identified with the management of Bloomingdale Asylum, in the capacity of assistant medical superintendent, has been formally appointed medical superintendent, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Dr. Charles H. Nichols. The promotion of Dr. Lyon is a most deserving one, reflecting credit upon the institution and its board of governors.

Dr. J. Elvin Courtney, formerly interne at Bloomingdale Asylum, has been appointed assistant physician to the Hudson River State Hospital, Poughkeepsie.

Dr. Charles Gray Wagner has been promoted to the position of first assistant physician in the Utica Asylum, to succeed Dr. Pilgrim.

Dr. Wm. D. Granger, for eight years first assistant physician at the State Asylum for the Insane, at Buffalo, N. Y. opens a private institution for the insane at Mt. Vernon, near this city, on June 1st. Dr. Granger has created for himself not only a State, but a national reputation, through the important part he took in aiding Dr. J. B. Andrews to make the Buffalo asylum the model institution of this country, and by the wide dissemination of his "Handbook for Training Nurses upon the Insane," published some years ago by G. P. Putnam's Sons. He has purchased the Masterson estate, midway between Mt. Vernon and Bronxville, consisting of an elegant stone mansion, cottages and seventeen acres of beautiful grounds upon the high ridge between the two towns. This institution will be the nearest to the city and most convenient of reach among those now in existence.

## New Instruments.

### AN IMPROVED CALORIMETER.

By ISAAC OTT, M. D.

THE great importance of the study of the heat production and heat dissipation of animals has made it necessary to perfect the heat-measuring instrument, usually called a calorimeter. This instrument may be either an air or water calorimeter. Without going into any historical details, it is permissible to state that Rosenthal and Rubner have recently constructed two air calorimeters, which are held to be quite reliable. But as they require greater care in the management of them than water calorimeters, the latter have been extensively used. Of the water calorimeters, the old one of Despretz, and Du Long, and that of d'Arsonval, are the most important. In the Despretz and Du Long instrument the interior box of metal is submerged in the water, and through the water a serpentine coil runs to convey air to and from the inner box containing the animal. It is in the main the instrument that has been used in Germany and this country. D'Arsonval was the first to make the interior box immovable by fastening it to the outer wall of the water reservoir. He also made a door to close the opening into the animal chamber. It was an improvement upon the clumsy, time-wasting and inaccurate instrument of Du Long. It kept the temperature constant by means of the expansion and contraction of the mass of water regulating a gas burner. Whatever change of temperature in the animal must then be due to changes in the